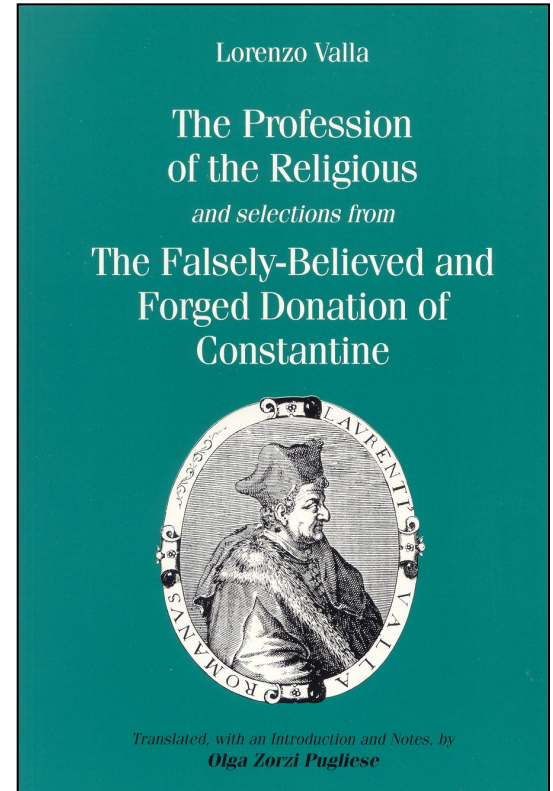


The Profession of the Religious
and selections from
The Falsely-Believed and Forged Donation of Constantine

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
OLGA ZORZI PUGLIESE

Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) was a leading humanist scholar and controversial writer of the fifteenth century. Although his works (all written in Latin) treat a number of linguistic, historical or philosophical issues, his most polemical treatises are those dealing with religious questions. In the works published here (ca. 1440), he advocates an inner spirituality achievable even by the laity. Additionally, he criticizes ecclesiastical institutions for their role in exploiting the legend according to which the emperor had conferred political power on the Pope.

These treatises—especially the well-known *Donation of Constantine*—aroused considerable interest among Protestant reformers. They are, moreover, fascinating texts for the modern reader. Structured as a dialogue and an oration, they illustrate the various discursive strategies devised by the author as effective means of persuasion.



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